



## ARMENIA ON THE HALYS RIVER: LESSER ARMENIA AND SEBASTIA

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Lesser Armenia or Pokr Hayk, that part of Armenia discussed in this volume, consists of the northwestern reaches of the Armenian Plateau, a region different in character from the rest of the Armenian highlands. As far as is known, it was never politically one with the rest of Armenia and seems always to have been a distinct entity until annexed by the Roman (later Byzantine) Empire.<sup>1</sup> Lesser Armenia was bounded on the east by the Euphrates River and on the north by the Pontic Mountains, which separated it from the Black Sea coast. As the province expanded, its southern border became the Taurus Mountains. Apart from the Pontic and Taurus ranges and the Anti-Taurus chain, which links these two, Lesser Armenia is more rolling than mountainous, and on the west it slopes gently away to the plains of east-central Anatolia, the region once known as Cappadocia. A low range of hills, clearly visible but not forming any serious barrier, appears to have been its western boundary.<sup>2</sup>

Lesser Armenia is traversed by the largest river of Anatolia and is therefore well watered. Known to the Greeks as the Halys (Salt) River and to the Armenians by the same name in transla-

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<sup>1</sup> David Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 572.

<sup>2</sup> The physical geography underlying the frontiers of Lesser Armenia may be clearly seen on the map by Suren T. Eremyan accompanying his *Hayastane est "Ashkharhatsoys" -i* [Armenia According to the "Geography"] (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1963), and even more clearly on the *USAF Aeronautical Approach Charts* (St. Louis, 1952): Tokat (324 DIV), Giresun (324 DIII), Bayburt (324 CIV), Sarkisla (341 BI), Divrigi (341 BII), Erzincan (34D AI), Kayseri (341 AIII), Elbistan (341 BIV), Malatya (341 BIII), Elazig (34D AIV).

tion as Aghis, it is called the Kizil Irmak (Red River) in Turkish, from the color of its waters muddy from the red clay hills through which it passes on its way to the Black Sea.<sup>3</sup> Also flowing through Lesser Armenia onward to the Black Sea is the second largest river in Anatolia, the Yeshil Irmak (Yellow River), known to the Greeks as the Iris (Rainbow), and to the Armenians as the Iuris. A major tributary of the Yeshil Irmak is unique in that it still bears an Armenian name, Kelkit in Turkish pronunciation, or Gayl Get (Wolf River) in Classical Armenian, and its equivalent in Greek (Lycus). Finally, there is the Chekerek River, which the Greeks and Romans called the Skylax, and the Armenians, Skiughaks.<sup>4</sup>

The boundaries of Lesser Armenia varied over the centuries. At one time or another, however, its chief cities and towns were Nicopolis, perhaps the original capital; Sebasteia (Sebastia/Sepastia, now Sivas), the later capital; Amasia; Evdokia (Tokat); Marzvan (Marsovan/Merzifon); Neocaesarea (Niksar); Zela (Zila); Zara; Tapura/Tephrike (Divrig/Divrighi); Gaurene (Gurun/Giurin); Colonia/Koghonia (Shabin-Karahisar); Melitene (Malatia); and Arabkir.<sup>5</sup> The main seaport for this landlocked area was Samsun, the ancient Greek colony of Amisus, but lesser, more difficult roads linked it to Kerasund (Giresun) and Trebizond (Trabzon) as well.

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<sup>3</sup> Pliny (the Elder), *Natural History* (Loeb Classical Library), "Halys," V.II.6; Claudius Ptolemy, *Geography*, ed. C.F.A. Nobbe (Leipzig, 1843-45; repr. Hildesheim, 1966), "Halyos," (V.4.3) and map 1 (Asia tabula prima). Robert H. Hewsen, *Aṣṣarhats'uyts': The Seventh Century Geography Attributed to Ananias of Shirak* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1994), pp. 24, 346, gives the form Alis from the long version (published 1881) and Aghis from the short version (published 1944). See also Robert H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Shirak, Aṣṣarhačoyč: The Long and Short Recensions* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1992). It is difficult to tell now whether the Greek name for the River Halys is a translation of the Armenian or vice-versa.

<sup>4</sup> On Iuris, see Hewsen, *Aṣṣarhačoyč*, from the short version (1944), p. 346, line 32. On Skiughaks, see Eremyan, *Hayastane*, p. 81 and map.

<sup>5</sup> Of these localities, Zara alone still bears its original name. Zila, site of Julius Caesar's victory over the Pontians in 47 B.C. (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 10, p. 558), was formerly Zela in Greek. Eremyan, *Hayastane*, p. 52, calls it Zela, suggesting that there is no known Classical Armenian form. For a reconstruction of the routes of these itineraries, see Robert H. Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), map 59.

*Ancient Armenia Minor*

The region of eastern Anatolia, which extended to Lesser Armenia, has been inhabited since the Stone Ages. In recorded history, the Hittites, Phrygians, Cimmerians, Medes, Achaemenian Persians, the Graeco-Macedonians of Alexander the Great, and then Alexander's Seleucid successors ruled the area. The earliest information on Lesser Armenia comes from Herodotus, the "Father of History," who in the fifth century B.C. noted quite accurately that the River Halys rose in Armenia.<sup>6</sup> When the Greek commander Xenophon described his passage through Armenia in the winter of 401-400 B.C., he referred to both an Armenia and a Western Armenia, indicating that there were already two areas called "Armenia" on the Armenian Plateau.<sup>7</sup> The various writers who describe Alexander's decisive defeat of the Persian army at the battle of Gaugamela in 331 B.C. make it clear that there were two commanders of the Armenian contingents in the Persian army, again suggesting the existence of two distinct Armenian political entities.<sup>8</sup>

No further detailed information is available on Lesser Armenia until the time of the geographer Strabo, who died circa 20 A.D. As Strabo was born in Amasia and connected to the royal house of the kingdom of Pontus, he might be supposed to have been well informed on Lesser Armenia, which adjoined his homeland on the south. According to Strabo, Lesser Armenia began as a shadowy kingdom quite apart from Greater Armenia. He states that the Lesser Armenians were under their own rulers until the rise of Mithridates VI Eupator "the Great," king of Pontus (111-63 B.C.), who annexed it to his kingdom.<sup>9</sup> It would seem logical that Tigran II (the Great, 95-56 B.C.), the dynamic Armenian king who built up a short-lived empire, would have annexed Lesser Armenia to his growing state, but he was the son-in-law of

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<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* (Loeb Classical Library), IV.44.

<sup>7</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis* (Loeb Classical Library), 4.4.4.

<sup>8</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis* (Loeb Classical Library); Apollodorus, in *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, ed. Theodorus Müller, vol. 1 (Paris: A. Firmin Didot, 1841), pp. 449-53.

<sup>9</sup> Strabo, *Geography* (Loeb Classical Library), 12.3.28.

Mithridates and needed the Pontic king as an ally. Hence, Lesser Armenia eluded Tigran's grandiose plans. After the Romans crushed Mithridates (71 B.C.) and forced Tigran into submission (66 B.C.), they restored Lesser Armenia as a separate state but appointed such client kings as suited their own purposes.<sup>10</sup>

The location of the capital of the kingdom of Lesser Armenia is uncertain. After the fall of Mithridates, it may have been set at Nicopolis, founded by the Roman general Pompey, and before that possibly at Ani-Kamakh, where the tombs of the kings of Greater Armenia were later located. It is clear, however, that the chief city of Lesser Armenia was Megalopolis (Great City), also said to have been founded by Pompey. Sometime during the reign of Caesar Augustus, the Romans annexed both Megalopolis and its surrounding district, Megalopolitis, renaming the city Sebasteia in the emperor's honor (*sebaste* being the Greek equivalent of the Latin *augustus* "awesome"). The last king of Lesser Armenia appointed by the Romans was Aristobulus (54-72 A.D.), a member of the royal house of Judea, a great-grandson of Herod the Great and thus a relative of Herod Antipas, who was king of Galilee during the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ. In 64 A.D., the Romans modified their policy of maintaining vassal states in the East and, one by one, began to convert them into provinces. Lesser Armenia was annexed in 71 or 72 and was added to the large province of Cappadocia, which had previously bordered it on the west.<sup>11</sup> To the Romans, Lesser Armenia was known as *Armenia Minor*, a direct translation of the Armenian *Pokr Hayk*.<sup>12</sup> In Greek, however, there were two terms in use, *Armenia Micra* and *Armenia Brachytera*,<sup>13</sup> which had the same meaning respectively as the Latin and Armenian names. Lesser Armenia is not as high in elevation as Greater Armenia, and there is at least one example of its being called *Storin Hayk*

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 12.3.29.

<sup>11</sup> Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, pp. 554, 573-74, 1285-86n25; Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, VI.8.24.

<sup>13</sup> Ptolemy, *Geography*, V.7.1; Jorg Wagner, *Die Neuordnung des Orients von Pompeius bis Augustus (67 v.Chr.-14 n.Chr.)*, in the series *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1983), map B V 7.

(Lower Armenia).<sup>14</sup>

The Greek geographer, Ptolemy of Alexandria, writing less than a century after the Roman annexation, has left an account of Cappadocia in which Lesser Armenia is carefully described, apparently as one of the prefectures of the province. According to Ptolemy, Lesser Armenia was now a small area located between Zara and the Euphrates River, a part of the greater province of Cappadocia, and took in neither Sebastia, nor Colonia, nor Nicopolis. The territory consisted of five tiny districts, which Ptolemy identifies as Orbalisene, Aitoulane, Airetike, Orsene, and Orbisene. It may be possible to get back from these strange Greek forms to the Armenian originals, since in Greek the locative suffix *-ene* represents a province and can therefore be discarded along with other suffixes. This leaves *Orb*, *Orbal*, *Ors*, *Airet*, and *Aitouan* (\**Ailouan*?). Though none of these names sounds Armenian, it is possible to see the syllable *ar* (as in Armenian) in Orbisene, Orbalisene, and Orsene (the shift from 'm' to 'b' being well attested in linguistics; compare Latin *magnus* = English *big*) or the syllable *hay* (as in *Hayk*) in Airetike and Aitruane, the loss of initial 'h' being equally common. For Ptolemy, there were twenty-nine places worthy of note in Lesser Armenia.<sup>15</sup> The ones that can be identified for certain include Zimara, Satala (Armenian: Satagh, now Sadak), and Nicopolis (Purk). It is not definite which of these localities was the center or capital of Roman Lesser Armenia, but it may have

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<sup>14</sup> Private communication from Professor Robert W. Thomson, Oxford University, 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Ptolemy, *Geography*, V.7.1; Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, map 42. Along the Euphrates: Sinibra, Aziris, Ladana, Sismara, Zimara, and Dascusa. In the mountains: Satala, Domana, Tapura, Nicopolis, Chorsabia, Charax, Dagona, Seleoberea, Caltiorissa, Analibla, Pisingara, Godasa, Eudoxata, Carape, Casara, Oromandus, Ispa. Phuphena, Arane, Phuphagena, Mardara, Varpasa, and Orsa. Sismara is probably a duplicate of Zimara (which still exists under the latter name); Phuphena and Phuphagena are probably also duplicates. Strangely, though Zara lay west of his Armenia Minor, Ptolemy makes no mention of it unless it be his Zama (perhaps a copyist's error for Zara). Such localities as Amasia, Sebastopolis (Sulusarai), Comana Pontica (Gomenek), Neocaesarea (Niksar), Zela (Zile), Sebasteia (Sivas), Mesoroma, Aza, Comana in Cappadocia, and Melitene, all later to be included in Lesser Armenia, are cited by Ptolemy elsewhere in his chapter on Cappadocia.

been Satala, the great Roman army base on the frontier with Greater Armenia (Sebastia, itself, as noted, lay outside of the jurisdiction). Here for two centuries was stationed an entire Roman legion, first the XVIth Flavia Firma, formed by Emperor Vespasian and then the XVth Apollinaris.<sup>16</sup> Satala was the seat of a Greek bishop as late as the mid-thirteenth century.<sup>17</sup> The Romans established at least one colony of veterans in the area, around the base of a high isolated rock upon which a great fortress stood guard. This they called Colonia (colony) or in Greek Caine Chorion, the site known now to the Turks as Şebinkarahisar (Shabin-Karahisar) and probably the site of Mithridates' fortress of Sinoria.<sup>18</sup> Colonia marked the most northerly point in Western Armenia, the fortress guarding a difficult pass through the Pontic Mountains to the Black Sea.

Lesser Armenia remained a division of Cappadocia until about 300 A.D., when the emperor Diocletian (284-305), aware of the tendency of Roman governors to use the provincial forces at their disposal in attempts to seize the imperial throne, broke the existing large provinces into smaller, less powerful units.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, Lesser Armenia was separated from Cappadocia to become a province in its own right, and Sebastia was added to serve as its capital. The new province appears to have been further enlarged by the addition of another division of Cappadocia, that of Melitene directly to the south, thereby doubling its size. Less than a century later, this enlarged province was divided in two by the emperor Theodosius I (379-95), who in this way created the new jurisdictions of Armenia Prima (First Armenia) with its capital at Sebastia, and Armenia Secunda (Second Armenia) with its capital at Melitene.<sup>20</sup>

Christianity came early to Lesser Armenia. There was a bishop of Sebastia, Saint Athenogenes, who was martyred there under

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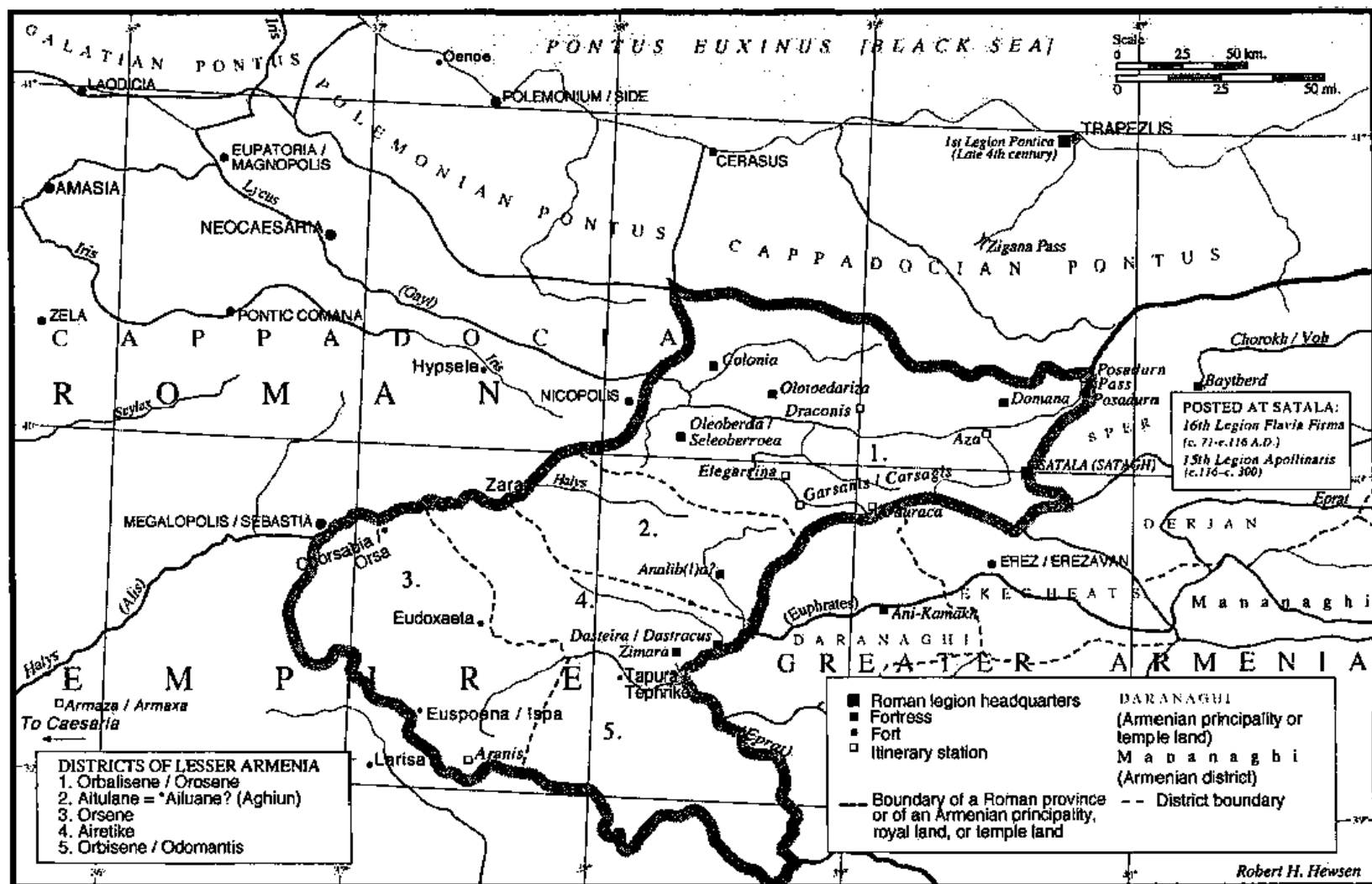
<sup>16</sup> Cassius Dio, lv.23-lv.24.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Briar and David Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos*, vol. I (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), p. 353.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>19</sup> Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, p. 722.

<sup>20</sup> N[ikoghayos] Adontz, *Armenia v epokhu Iustiniana* (St. Petersburg: Akademiia Nauk, 1908), trans. and comm. Nina G. Garsoian, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian* (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1970), pp. 69-70, 73-74.



Lesser Armenia (Pokr Hayk) in the Roman Period

Diocletian. He was followed by Saint Blaise (died circa 316), then Peter, who met with Saint Gregory the Illuminator on his return from his consecration at Caesarea, then Eulalius, who attended the Council of Nicaea in 325, Eustatius (died circa 380), and Saint Peter of Sebastia (died circa 392), who was the younger brother of the famed Saint Basil the Great of Caesarea.<sup>21</sup> Here were honored the Five Saints of Arauraca, a fortress lying somewhere to the southwest of Satala, who suffered martyrdom during the persecutions of Diocletian, and the Forty Martyrs of Sebastia, said to have died for the Christian faith during the persecution of Constantine's co-emperor Licinius (circa 310). Lesser Armenia was represented by bishops from Sebastia and Satala at the Council of Nicaea in 325, and again at the Council of Constantinople in 381.<sup>22</sup> In the fourth century, eastern Anatolia became renowned for the so-called Cappadocian fathers, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (circa 325/330-89), Saint Basil the Great (circa 329-79), and his brother Saint Gregory of Nyssa (circa 335/340-94), all of whom are honored by the Armenian Church and whose works were eagerly translated and much esteemed in medieval Armenia. Later, in 404, the great preacher Saint John Chrysostom "the Golden Tongue" was banished to Cucusus in Second Armenia and died at nearby Comana in Cappadocia in 407. No other writer, Armenian or foreign, is represented by so many Armenian manuscripts of his works.

### *Early Medieval Lesser Armenia*

The two small units of First and Second Armenia remained unchanged for about a century and a half until in the 530s the emperor Justinian (527-65), having been victorious against the Sasanian Persians, completely reorganized the Roman holdings in Armenia, taking First and Second Armenia and territories from

<sup>21</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 270.

<sup>22</sup> Erich Kettenhofen. *Die Neuordnung des Orients in diokletianischer und konstantinischer Zeit (284-337 n. Chr.)*, in the series *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1984), map B VI 1. Bishops from Amasia, Neocaesarea, Comana Pontica, and Zela also attended the Council of Nicaea, but these towns were not yet part of Lesser Armenia at that time.



Greater Armenia of about equal size and re-dividing the amalgam into four small provinces: First, Second, Third, and Fourth Armenia.<sup>23</sup> In connection with this reorganization, Justinian rebuilt the walls of Sebastia, Nicopolis, Colonia, and Satala in the district of Osroene (that is, \*Orbalisene), expanded the walls of Melitene, and restored the fortresses of Lysiorum and Lytararizon. In addition to these constructions, he built new fortresses, churches, and monasteries in all of these places, especially a noted monastery in Nicopolis dedicated to the Forty Martyrs.<sup>24</sup> All these constructions were a part of a larger scheme of defensive and other works that the emperor undertook along the entire eastern frontier from Mesopotamia to the Black Sea. Despite Justinian's efforts, however, in 575, a few years after his death, Sebastia was captured by the Persians and burned to the ground.

Nor did Justinian's new administrative arrangement last for long. In 591 or shortly thereafter, the emperor Maurice (582-602), who also launched extensive campaigns against Persia, reorganized Justinian's provinces to suit his own vision. The region of Sebastia remained Second Armenia, but Melitene, formerly Third Armenia, now became First Armenia (and the term Third Armenia fell out of use); Fourth Armenia, with its boundaries now somewhat altered, remained Fourth Armenia or Fourth Justiniana; another province called The Other Fourth Armenia was created to the east of the Tigris River with its capital at Martyropolis (now Farkin); and the region of Theodosiopolis (Armenian: Karin, now Erzurum) became Greater Armenia.<sup>25</sup>

These curiously irregular designations lasted not much longer than those of Justinian, the coming of the Arabs in the 640s shattering the arrangement. The five tiny Armenias (First, Second, Fourth, The Other Fourth Armenia, and Greater Armenia) were then abandoned as territorial units, and a new, vastly larger

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., chap. 6 *passim*.

<sup>24</sup> Procopius, *The Buildings* (Loeb Classical Library), III.iv.2-20.

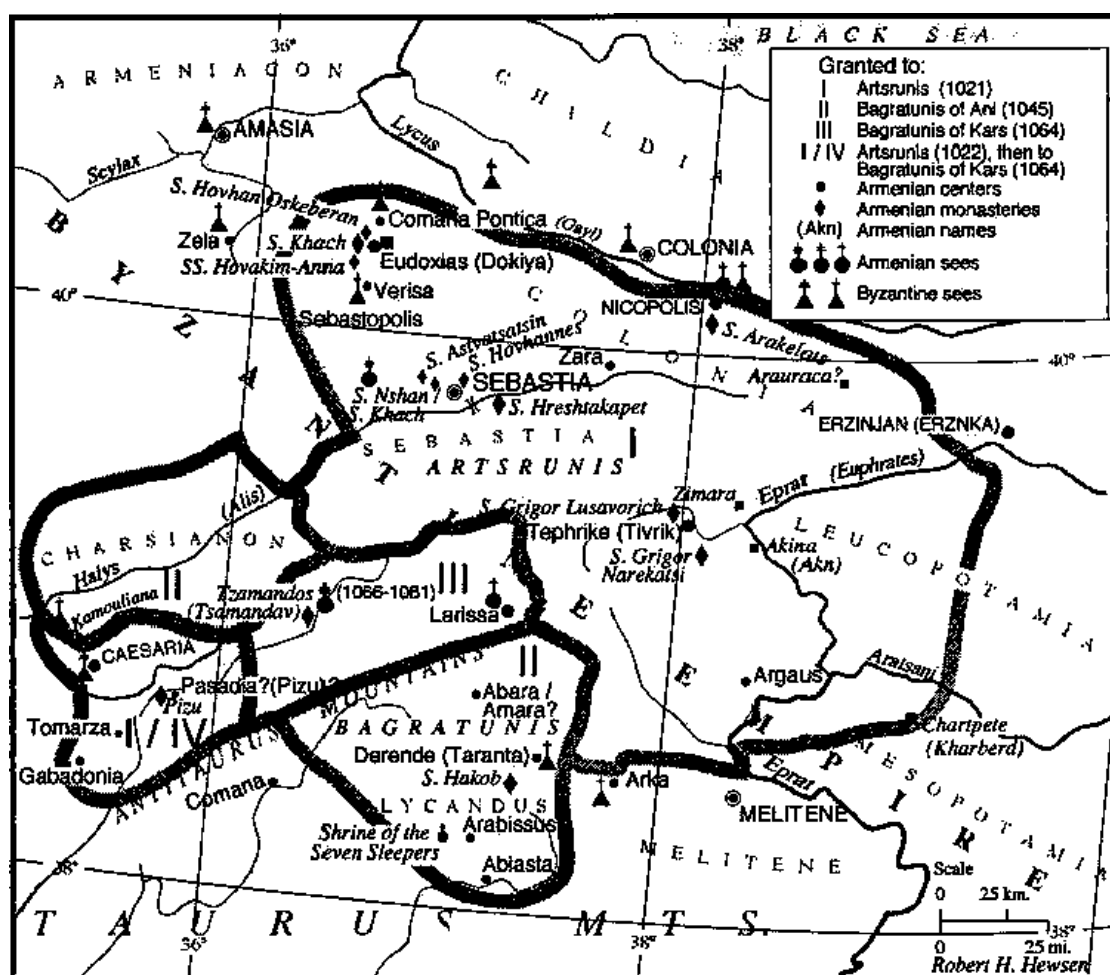
<sup>25</sup> Joseph Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 836* (Paris: Fontemoing et cie., 1919), p. 304. The revised edition (Lisbon: Librairie Bertrand, 1980), though greatly expanded by Marius Canard, does not contain the appendix dealing with these alterations.

military jurisdiction was created known as the Armeniakon (Armeniakon) Theme, with Sebastia as its capital. While the origin of the Byzantine *themes* has been a matter of debate, they are usually associated with the last years of the emperor Heraclius (608-42), the Byzantine ruler who had to cope with the Arab onslaught and the appalling loss of territory that this involved.<sup>26</sup> The Armeniakon Theme, one of the first to be established, may have been organized as early as 629, but it clearly was in existence in 667. A theme was a military province, a form of territorial martial law in which civil and military power were fused. The theme, under the command of a general, was divided into units called *cleisurarch* (*kleisura*), and the local population was expected to serve as a citizen militia in time of attack.

The Armeniakon Theme was a very large jurisdiction, and there has been speculation that this reflected the rapid increase of Armenians in the region. While the Armenian population in Anatolia undoubtedly did expand in the Byzantine period and Sebastia became one of the very first places that had an Armenian bishop outside of Greater Armenia (the see is recorded as early as 986), the fact remains that the theme took its name not from the ethnic group that inhabited it (even though Armenians dwelled there in large, perhaps majority, numbers) but from the name of the army unit that defended it. Thus, the Armeniakon Theme was not so much the territory of the empire populated by Armenians as it was the territory defended by the unit known as the Armeniakon. Evidence that the name of the theme was not based on the ethnicity of its population is deduced from the mid-ninth century when the vast Armeniakon Theme was liquidated and its cleisurarchies then became a number of smaller themes (Coloneia, Charsianon, Lycandus, and Melitene) with their ethnic character ignored. The region around Sebastia was a separate theme by 911. The remnant of the Armeniakon Theme, much reduced in size, was now centered to the northwest around the

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<sup>26</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), vol. 3, pp. 2034-35. For the origin of the thematic system, see also Agostino Pertusi, "La Formation des thèmes byzantins," *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1958): 1-40; J. Karayannopoulos, "Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung," *Byzantinisches Archiv* 10 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1959).



Armenian Statelets in Cappadocia and Sebastia

Pontic city of Amasia, whose cleisurarchy had not been considered Armenian territory in the past and which included such distinctly non-Armenian localities as the Black Sea ports of Sinope and Amisus (Samson; Samsun).<sup>27</sup>

In the time of Emperor Leo VI (886-912), a Greek archiepiscopal see existed at Sebastia (with four bishops under its jurisdiction), at Neocaesarea (three bishops), and at Amasia (five bishops).<sup>28</sup> The major local changes taking place in the Byzantine period were the eclipse of Nicopolis and the shift of its importance to Colonia (the later Shabin-Karahisar), the decline of Comana Pontica in favor of the nearby village of Evdokia (now Tokat), and the deterioration of Satala from a major military center to a mere village.<sup>29</sup> This part of Armenia was also a thriving center of the heretical doctrine known as Paulicianism, especially at the town of Tephrike.

The history of the city of Melitene was as tumultuous as that of Sebastia. After being walled by Justinian, it was likewise destroyed by the Persians in 575. The Arabs attacked it in 635 and occupied it in 656. Retaken by the Byzantines, the city was Arab again from 757, but much later in 934 was recaptured and destroyed by a Byzantine general of Armenian origin, John Curcuas (Gurgen). Repopulated mostly with Syrians, Melitene had both a Syrian Orthodox and a Jacobite archbishop. Plundered and burned by the Seljuk Turks in 1058, the city's walls were rebuilt by the Byzantines in 1063, but Melitene, like Sebastia, was lost definitively to the Turks in 1071, following the decisive battle of Manazkert (Manzikert).

### *The Armenian Statelets*

The Arab period in Armenian history came to an end in the late ninth century when, as the caliphate weakened, several indepen-

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<sup>27</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, p. 177; vol. 3, pp. 1862, 2034-35 (maps). The see is first recorded in 986.

<sup>28</sup> Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), p. 304.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey*, vol. 2 (London: Pindar Press, 1989), p. 295.

dent Armenian kingdoms emerged on the high plateau. A startling development in the eleventh century was the manifestation of an unprecedented Byzantine expansionist policy whereby the kings of Greater Armenia were induced to relinquish their domains to the Byzantines in return for lands within the previous limits of the empire. Thus, in 1019, Senekerim-Hovhannes (Sennecharib-John), the Artsruni king of Vaspurakan (1003/04-21), ceded his kingdom to the Byzantines in exchange for what appears to have been the themes of Sebasteia and Coloneia. In 1045, the Bagratuni King Gagik II of Ani (1041/42-1045) was bullied into doing the same, forced to give his kingdom to the Byzantines in return for lands to the south of those of Senekerim-Hovhannes in the themes of Charsianon and Lycandus. The process was completed in 1064, when King Gagik-Abas of the kingdom of Vanand or Kars (1029-64)<sup>30</sup> likewise surrendered his domains in Greater Armenia to the Byzantines in return for new lands in Cappadocia around the town of Gabadonia, later probably Everek, now Develi, southeast of Caesarea (Kaiseri; Kesaria) and an important Armenian center until 1915.

It is obvious that the displaced Armenian monarchs saw this transfer of territory as permanent. They were still living and reigning, at least for the most part, in what had always been considered a land called Armenia; the terrain was easy, the land rich, the climate less rigorous, and major caravan routes crossed the region in every direction. Hundreds of nobles and thousands of commoners followed their sovereigns from east to west, where the kings speedily built churches, founded monasteries, and undertook such economically advantageous projects as the erection of caravansaries and bridges.<sup>31</sup> One of these bridges, truly a noble work, spans the Halys River to the east of Sebastia, still bearing its original Armenian inscription.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Cyril Toumanoff, "Armenia and Georgia," *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, pt. 1: *The Byzantine Empire: Byzantium and Its Neighbours*, pp. 619-20; Gérard Dédéyan, "L'immigration arménienne en Cappadoce," *Byzantion* 45 (1975): 64-67, 271-79; Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, pp. 310-15.

<sup>31</sup> For a detailed description of the Armenian kingdoms in Cappadocia and the accomplishments of their rulers, see Dédéyan, "L'immigration arménienne."

<sup>32</sup> The inscription was still plainly visible when the author visited this bridge in 1998.

The Armenian Church likewise accepted the new geopolitical situation. The Catholicos Petros (Peter) I Getadardz (1019-58) moved to Sebastia in 1050, Khachik II (1058-65) transferred the Holy See to Tavblur, and Grigor Vkasaser (Gregory the Martyrophile, 1066-1105) relocated to Tzamandos. Not until Grigor III Pahlavuni (1113-66) did the See leave Lesser Armenia in favor of Hromkla in the periphery of Cilicia.<sup>33</sup> During this period, Armenian episcopal sees were established in Lesser Armenia. One of the most noted monasteries in this part of Armenia was Surb Nshan (Holy Sign), whose manuscript collection and scriptorium were renowned. Between the eleventh and eighteenth centuries, the Sebastia region also saw the rise of an important school of Armenian manuscript copying and illumination.

The Armenian statelets in the west did not last for long, however, as the Turkish invasions began in the latter half of the eleventh century. Sebastia, no longer walled, was taken and sacked in 1059, and not long after, Melitene,<sup>34</sup> Caesarea,<sup>35</sup> Neo-caesarea, Trebizond, and Sinope. Before the end of that century, all three Armenian royal dynasties in Cappadocia had come to an end,<sup>36</sup> and in 1147 Catholicos Grigor and his court departed for the fortress of Hromkla. The large number of Armenians who inhabited the Sebastia/Sivas area until World War I doubtless descended from the original Armenian population, but also many of them must have represented the progeny of the transplanted population from the east during this curious Armeno-Byzantine period.<sup>37</sup> The Armenians never forgot the saga of the arrival of their kings in Lesser Armenia, whose relics were shown in the

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<sup>33</sup> Malachia [Maghakia] Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia* (London: Mowbray, 1910; 2d rev. ed., New York: St. Vartan Press, 1955), p. 199.

<sup>34</sup> Vryonis, *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, p. 91; Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, p. 373.

<sup>35</sup> Caesarea was attacked by the Turks in 1067 and was destroyed by Masud, Sultan of Konia, in 1143. See *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, p. 364; Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, p. 159.

<sup>36</sup> Cyril Toumanoff, *Les dynasties de la Caucasic chrétienne* (Rome, 1990), pp. 104, 123, 124.

<sup>37</sup> It seems likely that many if not most of the newly settled Armenians in Lesser Armenia and Cappadocia fled from the Turks to settle in Cilicia, but certainly some must have remained behind. The local princes, however, deserted the area and fled, it would seem, to Cilicia. See Vryonis, *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, p. 91.

local monasteries, and, however dubious, from whom a number of prominent Armenian families of Sebastia even claimed descent.<sup>38</sup>

### *Late Medieval Lesser Armenia*

After the Seljuk invasions, the western territories of Armenia passed to a number of Turkmen dynasties, the most important of which was that of the Danishmendids, who soon built up a state that stretched from Melitene (Malatya), which they had taken in 1124, to Angora (Ankara), acquired a few years later.<sup>39</sup> Everything in between these centers was theirs as well, including Sebastia, which the Seljuks had captured around 1090, calling it by its Arabic name, Sivas, and Caesarea, which they took in 1092, calling it Kaysariya (later Kaiseri).

The Danishmendids flourished in east-central Anatolia for more than a century, collecting tribute from their neighbors, Christian and Muslim alike, and harassing the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia to the south. In 1173, however, the Danishmendids were ousted by the Seljuk Turks ruling from Konia, who held the area of Lesser Armenia until the coming of the Mongols some 75 years later.<sup>40</sup> Though relatively brief, this period appears to have been a golden age for Sebastia/Sivas, as some of the most important Seljuk monuments in Anatolia are located there, including a hospital built by Sultan Kaykavuz I in 1219 and three noted *medresses* (religious schools) founded in 1271.<sup>41</sup> It was in the Seljuk period, too, that there began the Islamization of this part of Anatolia, which previously had been entirely Christian—Greek Orthodox and Armenian.<sup>42</sup> As late as the mid-fourteenth century, a Greek Orthodox bishop still officiated in Sivas, and there was an Armenian bishop resident at the nearby Surb

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<sup>38</sup> Robert H. Hewsen, "In Search of Armenian Nobility: Five Families of the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 3 (1987): 93-105.

<sup>39</sup> For the Danishmendids in northwestern or Lesser Armenia, see Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, pp. 375-78.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 378-79.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 296-97.

<sup>42</sup> Vryonis, *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, chap. 3 *passim*. This monastery, abandoned after 1915, was completely bulldozed in 1980.

Nshan monastery until the Genocide in 1915.<sup>43</sup>

### *The Mongol Period*

The eruption of the Mongols in the thirteenth century was a devastating experience, but the invaders soon settled down to conventional rule as the Ilkhanid dynasty in Persia, and there they ultimately converted to Islam. For a time, Lesser Armenia remained under Ilkhanid governors until control of the area was seized by a Turkish lord named Eretna (1326-52), who had been governor of the Ilkhanid possessions in Anatolia. Centering his rule at Sebastia, Eretna soon made himself master of all of the various petty Turkmen and Turkish lords in central Anatolia. His successors, however, moved their capital to Caesarea.<sup>44</sup> Sources for the Eretnids are sparse, and little is known about how they governed their state or the status of the Armenians under their rule. A certain prosperity does seem to have existed in this period, as Islamic arts and culture flourished. But the petty Turkish begs who ruled under the Eretnids proved difficult to control, and one of them, the beg of Kaiseri, ended the Eretnid dynasty, his line holding Caesarea and Sebastia until both were taken from it by the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid II in 1398.<sup>45</sup>

It was at this time that the Turko-Mongol warlord Timur Leng (Tamerlane) invaded Anatolia, marching against Sebastia in 1401. Children sent out with garlands of flowers to placate Timur were trampled beneath the hooves of his warriors' horses, and some 4,000 Armenian troops organized to defend the city were captured and buried alive. Sebastia was totally destroyed, and its walls and other fortifications were dismantled. After capturing Sultan Bayazid at Angora in 1402, Timur Leng eventually withdrew from central Anatolia and moved on to perpetrate fresh atrocities elsewhere, particularly at Van. His dynasty survived in the region for only a few years, and by 1421 Sebastia had passed back under Ottoman rule. The fortress was rebuilt, though the

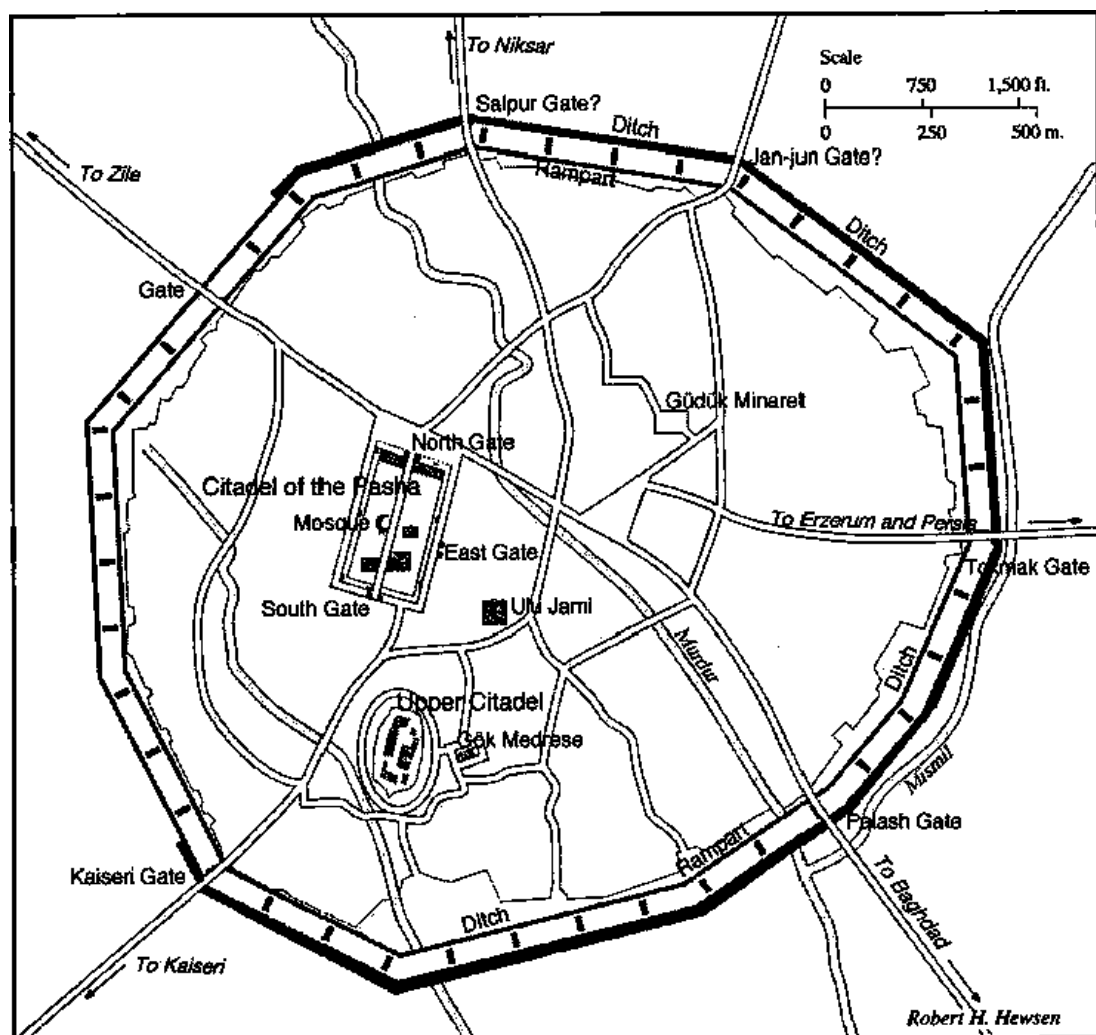
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<sup>43</sup> Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, p. 386; Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, p. 205.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 379-88.

<sup>45</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 9, p. 690.





Seljuk Sivas in the Eleventh Century

city never recovered fully from the devastation. Moreover, the caravan route and the prosperity that it had brought to Sebastia now passed through Tokat to the northwest.<sup>46</sup>

Evdokia, later known as Tokat, probably founded in the eleventh century under Byzantine rule, was built on the gentle slopes of a two-peaked rock crowned by a medieval citadel that served as the non-walled city's defense against attack.<sup>47</sup> It became important only under the Danishmendids, and its first significant buildings were not erected until the Seljuk and Ilkhanid periods. These structures include a number of mosques, medresses, *tekkes* (shrines), *turbes* (mausoleums), *hamams* (bathhouses), and caravansaries.

For centuries, Tokat, though only a provincial town subject to an emir appointed by the Ilkhanid and successor governors of Sivas (1335-1400),<sup>48</sup> was perhaps the most important city in eastern Anatolia, larger than Sebastia, Kesaria, Amasia, and Angora.<sup>49</sup> Erzerum alone surpassed it in size and population. Taken by the Ottomans in 1400, Tokat became the private property of the sultan. In 1471, it was attacked and destroyed by the Turkmen lord Uzun Hasan. Though it suffered greatly in the subsequent Ottoman-Persian wars, Tokat became very prosperous in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thanks to its large industries and the income from the lucrative overland transit trade.<sup>50</sup> Chief among these local industries were cloth-printing, cloth-dying and silk weaving, most of which were in the hands of the local Greek and Armenian populations. Armenians had settled in Tokat (which they called by its Greek name, Evdokia) from an early period. An Armenian village, Krikoris or Kirkorus, is attested as early as the thirteenth century, and ultimately there

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<sup>46</sup> Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, pp. 296-97.

<sup>47</sup> It is possible that Evdokia stood on or near the ancient fortress of Dazimon. Its Byzantine name, Evdokeia (English: Eudocia), suggests that it was founded or re-founded by the husband of one of the Byzantine empresses of that name, perhaps Constantine X Ducas (1059-1067) or Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-71), each of whom was a successive husband of Eudocia Macrembolitissa.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>49</sup> For the history of Tokat under Ottoman rule, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 10, pp. 558-60.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 559.

were twenty-two other Armenian and six partially Armenian villages in the *kaza* (district).<sup>51</sup> Outside the city was an Armenian monastery dedicated to Saints Hovakim and Anna, which was the seat of an Armenian bishop. Tokat under the Ottomans continued to be the most important city in the area, a thriving commercial center, fading only in the early nineteenth century with the rise to importance of the Trebizond-Erzurum trade route.<sup>52</sup>

### *The Eyalet, Pashalik, and Vilayet of Sivas*

Under Ottoman rule, Lesser Armenia was organized as a governor-generalship known as an *eyalet*. Over this vast province ruled the *beglerbeg* (*beylerbey*) or governor-general and under him the *sanjaks*, who governed the seven *sanjaks* or counties into which the province was divided: Sivas, Amasia, Chorum, Bozok, Samsun, Divrig, and Arabkir.<sup>53</sup> Lesser Armenia is fertile, with wheat and barley the chief crops. Vineyards and orchards are found in the lower-lying valleys, as well as copper, lead, salt, alum, manganese, arsenic, and coal.<sup>54</sup> Far removed from the theater of the Ottoman-Persian wars, this part of Anatolia should have enjoyed the same prosperity that characterized the bulk of the Ottoman Empire during its apex of power, but this was not to be. Instead of ruling the local areas directly, the sultan passed out large tracks of land in the province in the form of fiefs granted in return for military service, 48 large ones called *ziamats*, and 928 smaller ones called *timars*. The local Turkish lords who held these fiefs proved as unruly and obstreperous under the Ottomans as they had under the Eretnids, and the area

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<sup>51</sup> For the local Armenian villages of Tokat, see Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Papoudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'empire Ottoman à la veille du Génocide* (Paris: Editions Art et d'Histoire ARHIS, 1991), s.v. "Tokat."

<sup>52</sup> Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, p. 295.

<sup>53</sup> For the divisions of the vilayet, see Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie: Géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie-Mineure*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1892), map between pp. 612-13; Mesrob K. Krikorian, *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire, 1860-1908* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 53-54; Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, map 179.

<sup>54</sup> Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, pp. 626-39.

was frequently devastated by local wars, blood feuds, and periodic Ottoman campaigns to restore order. As usual, the peaceful Greek, Armenian, and Muslim peasantry bore the brunt of these disorders, and the merchants, tradesmen, and artisans suffered greatly from the general insecurity.<sup>55</sup>

During this troubled period, many Greeks and Armenians left Lesser Armenia. One of the most noted native sons of the region was Mkhitar of Sebastia (Mkhitar Sebastatsi, 1676-1749), who converted to Catholicism and became a monk in Constantinople and then went on to found the Mekhitarist Order, which settled on the island of San Lazzaro in Venice in 1717 and played a central role in the Armenian cultural revival.<sup>56</sup> In 1818, the reforming Sultan Murad II, with the aid of the local derebey (valley lord) of the Chepne Oghlu clan, finally succeeded in crushing opposition to the central government in the eyalet of Sivas. Peace came at last, and for the next century the region became more prosperous.

By the nineteenth century, the vast area of the Sivas eyalet had been reorganized as a *pashalik* or governor-generalship under a pasha, encompassing the four sanjaks of Sivas, Tokat, Amasia, and Shabin-Karahisar. The former sanjaks of Chorum, Bozok, and Samsun were not included in the new jurisdiction, while Divrig and Arabkir were reduced from sanjaks to kazas and attached to the sanjak of Sivas. In 1864, the pashalik was reorganized into the *vilayet* or civil province of Sivas. This new vilayet, with its capital at the city of Sivas, was divided into the same four sanjaks, comprising a total area of 83,700 square kilometers (32,317 square miles) and subdivided into 26 kazas with 257 *nahiyes* (cantons) containing some 4,760 villages (see map, page 5 above).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, map 152; Donald E. Pitcher, *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire from Earliest Times to the End of the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

<sup>56</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, pp. 421-22. Mkhitar (baptismal name Petros Manuk) was ordained into the priesthood in 1696 as Mkhitar "Consoler" at Surb Nshan monastery near Sivas.

<sup>57</sup> Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 614; Krikorian, *Armenians*, pp. 53-54. For a listing of the Armenian villages of the vilayet, see Kévorkian and Papoudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire ottoman*, s.v. "Le Vilayet de Sebaste/Sivas," pp. 231-63.

*Population*

Population statistics are unreliable for the eastern Ottoman provinces. The Armenian population in Lesser Armenia was quite dense in the eleventh century after the transfer there of the Armenian royalty and many thousands of their subjects from the east. This was no longer true at the end of the nineteenth century, however, when Armenians were concentrated in the sanjaks of Sivas, Tokat, and Amasia, especially in the northern kazas, largely because of the importance of the local trade route connecting Erzerum with Angora. Beyond the towns in the southern part of the vilayet, such as Gurun, Gemerek, and Darende, there were few Armenian villages: five in Azizie kaza and only one, Ashoti, in Darende kaza. The Armenian Patriarchate showed that there were 280,000 Armenians in the province of Sivas in 1882. The subsequent population figures are as follows:

**Vital Cuinet (circa 1890)<sup>58</sup>**

Muslim	
Sunni: Turk, Turkmen, and Circassian	559,680
Shiite: Kizilbash, etc.	279,834
Armenian	
Apostolic	129,523
Catholic	10,477
Protestant	30,433
Greek	76,068
TOTAL	1,086,015

**Malachia Ormanian (1910)<sup>59</sup>**

(Figures for the seven dioceses in the province)

Apostolic	186,000
Catholic	8,000
Protestant	6,000
TOTAL	200,000

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Arabkir was later attached to the province of Kharpert (Harput) or Mamuret ul-Aziz.

<sup>58</sup> Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 617.

<sup>59</sup> Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, p. 205.

**Armenian Patriarchate  
of Constantinople (1912)<sup>60</sup>**

Armenian	165,000
Greek and other Christian	30,000
Jacobite, Nestorian, and Chaldean	25,000
Turk	192,000
Nomadic Kurd	15,000
Sedentary Kurd	35,000
Circassian	45,000
TOTAL	507,000

**Ottoman Census (1914)<sup>61</sup>**

Muslim	939,735
Armenian Apostolic	143,406
Armenian Catholic	3,693
Protestant (all races)	4,575
Greek	75,324
Syrian Christian	3
Yezidi	2,363
Jew	344
TOTAL	1,169,443

**Justin McCarthy (1911-12)<sup>62</sup>**

Muslim	1,196,300
Syrian, Nestorian, and Chaldean	3
Armenian	182,912
Jew	407
Greek	90,419
Other	2,797
TOTAL	1,472,838

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<sup>60</sup> Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), pp. 48, 54.

<sup>61</sup> Kemal Karpaz, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 188-89.

<sup>62</sup> McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities*, pp. 110-11.

### *Economy*

The vilayet of Sivas was less mountainous and much richer than the neighboring provinces to the east. Agriculture flourished, nomadic herders were comparatively few, and there were several populous towns with the beginnings of local manufactures.<sup>63</sup> In agriculture, wheat and barley were the main crops, but oats, beans, corn, peas, grapes, and various fruits, especially apples, were also cultivated. Among mineral resources, none of them adequately exploited until after World War I, were alum, arsenic, coal, copper, iron, lead, manganese, marble, molybdenum, oil, saltpeter, and silver. Salt was partly extracted from mines, but there were also several salt lakes in the area east of Sebastia city, which were drawn upon, especially by Armenians in the local villages. Amasia was the center for the extraction of molybdenum, and the mineral was also mined at Shabin-Karahisar, where there were important deposits of alum as well. There were several mineral springs in the northern part of the vilayet, and city people came from long distances to take the waters at places such as Kangal and Khavza (Havza).<sup>64</sup> The chief industries, such as they were, included metalworking, leather-working, silk weaving, rope making, clothing manufacture, and the operation of mills, in all of which the Armenians were disproportionately represented. The production of carpets had been important at Tokat in earlier times.

In the sanjak of Sivas, the local peasants were engaged in agriculture and handicrafts. In the towns, the Armenians were the merchants, traders, grocers, and artisans but were also involved in money changing and lending. Most of the rather extensive trade of the province was in their hands. In Tokat sanjak, the

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<sup>63</sup> Vahan Hambardzumian, *Giughashkharh: Patmakan ev azgagrakan usumna-sirutun* [Village World: Historical and Ethnographic Study] (Paris: Daron, 1927), English trans. Murad A. Meneshian, *Village World: An Historical and Cultural Study of Govdoon* (Providence, RI: Govdoon Youth of America, 2001), p. 22; Great Britain, Parliament, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon by Viscount Bryce*, Miscellaneous no. 31, 1916, comp. and ed. Arnold J. Toynbee (London: Sir Joseph Causton and Sons, 1916), p. 301.

<sup>64</sup> Hambardzumian, *Village World*, pp. 14-17.

Armenians were again found mostly in the towns, where they were involved in wholesaling and retailing, import and export, and served both in the professions, such as chemists and doctors, and as assistants to provincial, county, and district administrators, as forest and mining inspectors, as interpreters in European consulates, and (one of them) as the municipal architect.<sup>65</sup>

### *Ecclesiastical Organization*

As a result of administrative reorganizations in the Armenian Church in the nineteenth century, the vilayet of Sivas was divided into seven dioceses, with an archbishop at Sebastia and bishops at Amasia, Evdokia, Shabin-Karahisar, Divrig, and Gurun, and an abbot-prelate at Darende (Tarantia). Sebastia had 74 parishes, 56 churches, and about 80,000 church members; Amasia, 19 parishes, 20 churches, about 25,000 members; Evdokia, 16 parishes, 19 churches, about 21,000 members; Shabin-Karahisar, 41 parishes, 35 churches, about 25,000 members; Gurun, 11 parishes, 16 churches, about 17,000 members; Divrig, 14 parishes, 19 churches, about 11,000 members; and Darende, 2 parishes, 4 churches, about 7,000 members. Sebastia, Amasia, Evdokia, and Shabin-Karahisar were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, whereas Gurun, Divrig, and Darende were under the Catholicos of Cilicia, who resided at Sis in the vilayet of Adana.<sup>66</sup>

In the Armenian Catholic Church, Sebastia and Tokat were originally separate sees, the first established as a bishopric in 1858, the second as a bishopric in 1892, when Sivas was elevated to an archiepiscopal see and joined with the see of Tokat, with the dignities of archbishop of Sivas and bishop of Tokat united in a single primate. The Armenian Catholic see of Trebizond extended into the vilayet of Sivas, and the Catholic parishes of Marsovan, Amasia, and Khavza (where there was also a convent of French and French Canadian sisters) belonged to that ecclesiastical jurisdiction.<sup>67</sup> According to Ormanian, there

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<sup>65</sup> Krikorian, *Armenians*, pp. 55-57, 60.

<sup>66</sup> Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, pp. 205, 207.

<sup>67</sup> Jean Naslian, *Les mémoires de Mgr. Jean Naslian, Évêque de Trébizonde*, 2



were 5,000 Armenian Catholics in the diocese of Sivas, 2,000 in Tokat, 500 in Amasia, 500 in Gurun, and none in Shabin-Karahisar, Divrig, Darende, or any other kazas of the province.<sup>68</sup>

Protestantism came early to this part of Armenia with the arrival of Congregationalist missionaries sent out by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), which established a mission station in Sebastia in 1851. There was already an autonomous Armenian Protestant congregation with its own church in 1858. An American mission of the Disciples of Christ was active from 1882. It was Marsovan, however, that became the major Congregationalist station in the vilayet. A boarding school for girls was opened there in 1865, the Harbinger High School in 1883, and the celebrated Anatolia College in 1886.<sup>69</sup>

### *Education*

According to Cuinet, there were a large number of Armenian schools in the province of Sivas in the 1880s. More than 11,000 students were enrolled in the districts of Sivas, Tokat, Amasia, and Shabin-Karahisar alone.<sup>70</sup> In the provincial capital, the Apostolic Armenians maintained more than ten schools for boys, among them the Targmanchats, Nersesian, Sahakian, Aramian, Rubinian, Torgomian, Prkichian, Surb Minas, Mkhitarian, and Vardanian, four schools for girls, the Gayanians, Hripsimian, Lusinian, and Bezikian, as well as several kindergartens. The Protestants had three schools, including the coeducational Erkser varzharan. Apart from these and a few private Armenian schools, the American missionaries operated educational institutions. Besides those already mentioned, a boys' normal school was established in Sebastia and developed into the Sivas Teachers' College. There was also a Roman Catholic Jesuit school (collège), actually more of a preparatory school for students in-

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vols. (Beirut [Vienna: Mekhitarist Press], 1951), vol. 1, pp. 221-48.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 80; Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, pp. 205, 207.

<sup>69</sup> Hewsén, *Armenia: A Historic Atlas*, p. 191.

<sup>70</sup> Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 621. There are significant errors and contradictions in some of Cuinet's statistics and tables. [ed.]

tending to enter institutions of higher education elsewhere.

Despite its prosperity, the province of Sivas was somewhat of a cultural backwater for the Armenians until the restoration of the Ottoman constitution of 1908, whereupon many new schools, clubs, and societies were formed in its cities, towns, and villages, Armenian newspapers and other publications began to appear, including the weeklies *Andranik* (1909-12) and *Hoghtar* (1910-14) in Sebastia and *Aparazh* (Rock; founded 1910) in Amasia. During this period, performances of an Armenian theatrical society (organized in the 1870s) became more frequent. The common people of Sebastia, moreover, possessed a rich local folk culture with their own dialect, music, songs, and dances, and a vast body of customs, folktales, proverbs, and other local lore.

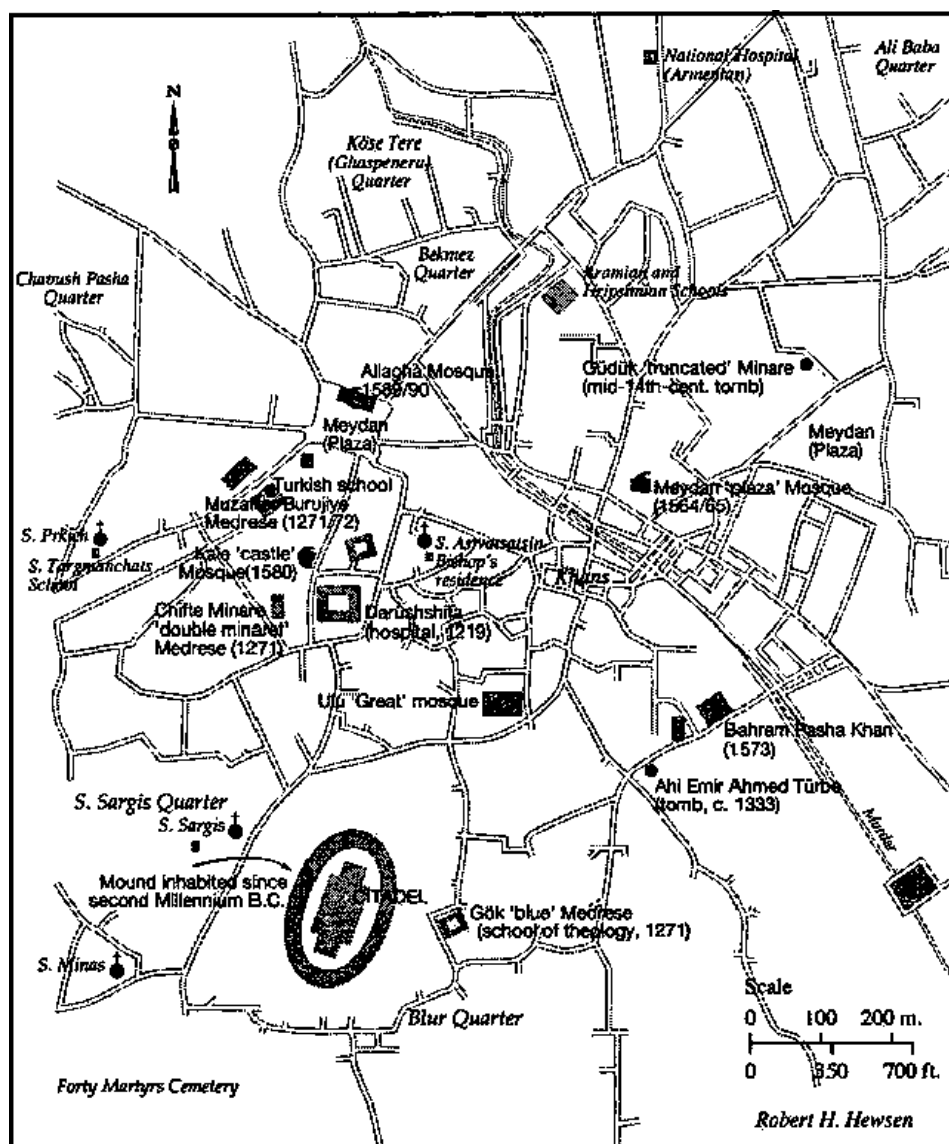
### *The Towns*

The city of Sebastia lies at an altitude of 1,275 meters (4,183 feet) above sea level somewhat north of the right bank of the Kizil Irmak. Besides the Cathedral of Surb Astvatsatsin (built in 1840), the Apostolic Armenians possessed three other churches: Surb Hakob, Surb Prkich, and Surb Sargis. There were also an Armenian Catholic church, an Armenian Protestant church, a Greek Orthodox church, and a Catholic chapel attached to the Jesuit mission in the city. In addition, Sivas had an Armenian hospital, an American mission and American mission hospital, and a Swiss orphanage. The city was well known for its fine specimens of Seljuk architecture, including mosques, medresses, and tombs.<sup>71</sup>

Shabin-Karahisar is spread out on the slopes of a high, isolated, fortress-crowned peak, "like an eagle's nest clung to the side of a rock." A largely Armenian town of some 5,000 inhabitants, it was noted for its alum mines and famed for its heroic though unsuccessful month-long defense during the Genocide of 1915. Located in the extreme northern part of Lesser Armenia

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<sup>71</sup> For the American and Swiss hospitals, see Toynbee, *Treatment of Armenians*, pp. 304, 309. For the Muslim monuments of Sivas and Tokat, see Albert Gabriel, *Monuments turcs d'Anatolie*, vol. 2: *Amasia-Tokat-Siwas* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1934); Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, chap. 6, "Sivas and Tokat," pp. 293-392.



The City of Sivas, 1914

and the vilayet of Sivas, the town faced a small plain in which lay the Armenian villages of Mshagnots, Adzbdar (Aydzbdar), Ktanots, Sevindig, Aghvanis (Aghravis), Buseyid, and Anerghi (Anezri), all destroyed before the fall of Shabin-Karahisar. Another village, Chrdikhi, stood on a crest facing the city and alone survives as Çirdak, though, of course, without its Armenian population. To the southwest, there were important Armenian communities at Enderes (Armenian: Andreas, now Sushehri) and at Purk or Burk (ancient Nicopolis).<sup>72</sup>

Tokat lies in a broad, orchard-filled plain beneath steep hills crowned by ruins that probably had been the ancient fortress of Dazimon. The city developed in the late Middle Ages as the nearby Gomenek (ancient Comana Pontica) declined and gradually came to replace it, albeit on a different site. Well watered by the Yeshil Irmak and its tributaries, the Kelkit and the Chekerek, and located on the major artery of trade through northern Anatolia, Tokat had become by the nineteenth century one of the largest cities of Asiatic Turkey. Known for its blue-tiled Gök Medrese, a Seljuk construction dating from the thirteenth century, it was also the site of a Dervish monastery built about 1290.<sup>73</sup>

An American mission station was founded in Tokat in 1864, but there had already been a strong Armenian Protestant congregation in the city ten years earlier. The Americans also maintained a school at Tokat, although their seminary, founded in 1855, was transferred to Kharpert (Harput) four years later. Another American mission sponsored by the Disciples of Christ was active since 1883. There were Jesuits in Tokat, who operated a collège, and a convent of Armenian Catholic Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (Anarat Hghutian). The Armenians, for their part, sponsored a large school of their own.<sup>74</sup>

The town of Zila or Zile in the sanjak of Tokat lay at the foot of a conical mountain on the top of which were the ruins of an

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<sup>72</sup> See Aram Haigaz, *The Fall of the Aerie*, trans. H. Baghdoian (Boston: Ararat Publishing, 1935), pp. 37-38.

<sup>73</sup> Gabriel, *Monuments turcs d'Anatolie*, vol. 2; Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, pp. 310-23.

<sup>74</sup> Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, p. 191.

ancient fortress. Its population of about 20,000 people was said by Cuinet in the 1880s to be 20 percent Armenian,<sup>75</sup> whereas the *Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia* gives 20,125 for the total Armenian population and 16,668 non-Armenians<sup>76</sup> (an example of the difficulties relating to population statistics). Niksar (ancient Neocaesarea and also in Tokat sanjak), although only a small place, was notable for having been one of the last strongholds of Hellenism in eastern Anatolia, remaining, with Amasia, the seat of a Greek Orthodox metropolitan long after most of the other metropolitan sees of this part of Asia Minor had ceased to exist.<sup>77</sup> Ottoman from 1397, Niksar possessed ten mosques, a Greek church, an Armenian church, an ancient citadel, Roman ruins, and Seljuk architecture.<sup>78</sup> The Armenian population of this small town grew from 2,053 in 1877 to 2,830 on the eve of World War I.<sup>79</sup> Nearby lay the village of Bazirieh, with an Armenian monastery said to have once contained the tomb of Saint John Chrysostom (died 407), before his relics were transferred to Constantinople.<sup>80</sup>

Marsovan lay in what was the farthest extension to the northwest of Lesser Armenia. The Armenian Apostolic community possessed three churches and three schools there, including one for girls, and the city was a major center of missionary activity. Jesuits and Armenian Catholic Sisters of the Immaculate Conception were present in Marsovan (the latter with a second station in Khavza). The important Armenian Protestant congregation in the town was organized in 1853. As in Tokat, there was also a mission of the Disciples of Christ from 1883. The American Board mission station dating from 1856 maintained a seminary, a hospital, and an American preparatory school known as Anatolia College. Founded in 1886, the college was transferred to Aleppo in 1921 and ultimately to Thessaloniki, Greece.

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<sup>75</sup> Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 730.

<sup>76</sup> *Haykakan Sovetakan hanragitaran*, vol. 3 (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1977), p. 526.

<sup>77</sup> Vryonis, *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, p. 307n119; Hewsens, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, p. 193.

<sup>78</sup> Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 734.

<sup>79</sup> Kévorkian and Papoudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire*, p. 254.

<sup>80</sup> Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, p. 735.

The town of Amasia had only 30,000 people, of whom about a third were Armenian, yet it boasted a Jesuit mission, a Roman Catholic collège, a convent of French Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyons, and five Armenian schools for boys and two for girls. Other places in Amasia sanjak inhabited by Armenians included the small towns of Gumush-Hajikoy, Yenijekoy, Ladik, Khavza, Mejid-ozu, Vezirkopru, and the single village of Korkoy.<sup>81</sup>

### *The Rural Areas*

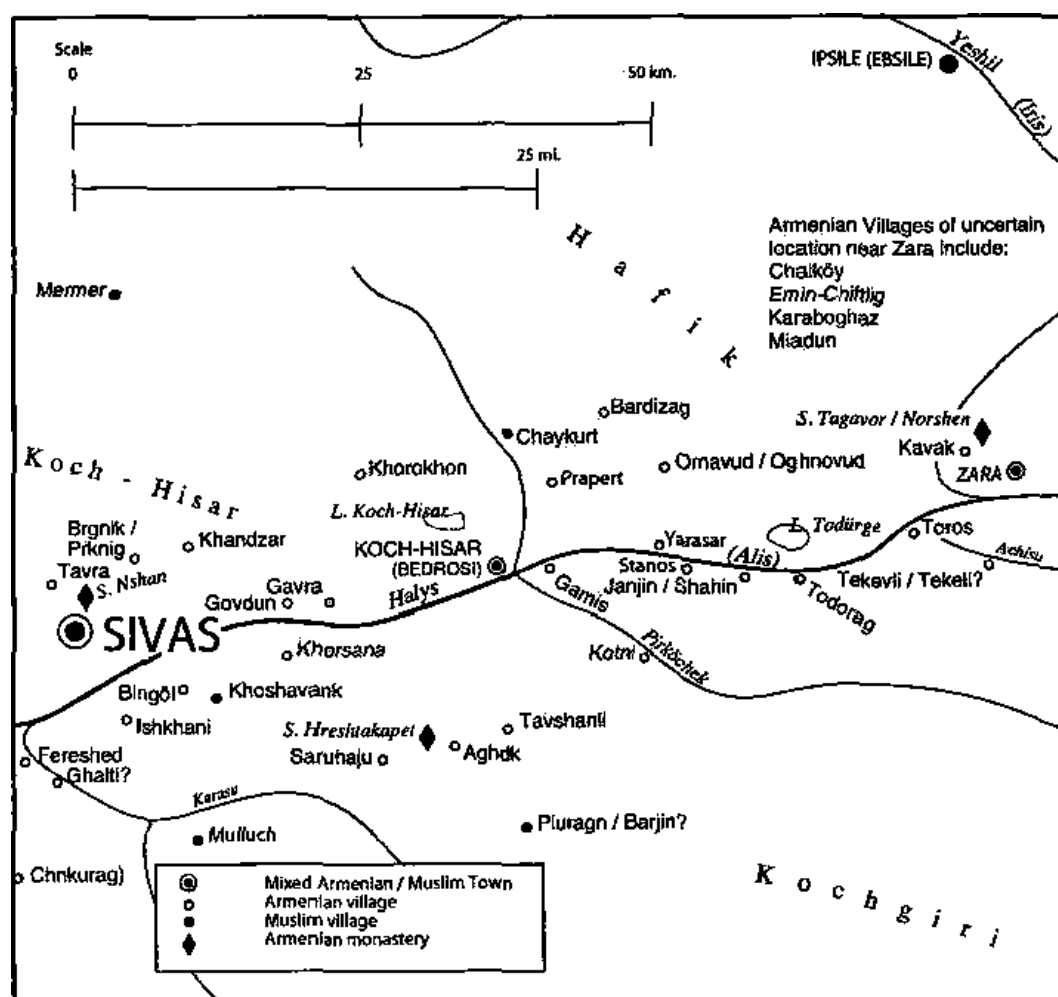
Within the vilayet of Sivas, the sanjak of Sivas was reputed to be the granary of the province, and the sanjak of Tokat its garden, a reference to the fields of the first and the many orchards of the second. About 2 kilometers (1.25 miles) from Sebastia lay the Monastery of Surb Nshan (Holy Sign, meaning The Cross), reputed dubiously to have been founded by Saint Thaddeus but certainly standing in the eleventh century when it was embellished by King Senekerim-Hovhannes after he moved to Lesser Armenia from Vaspurakan in 1021. The throne of the Artsruni kings was preserved there. Also near Sivas was the Monastery of Anapat, opposite a hill on the summit of which was yet another dedicated to Surb Hakob (Saint James). Other monasteries still active in the late Ottoman period included Surb Hreshtakapet (Holy Archangel), Surb Vlasios (Saint Blaise), Khonenktur or Surb Khndrakatar (She Who Fulfills Requests), and Surb Karasun Mankants (Forty Martyrs). About 8 kilometers (5 miles) on the road from Sivas to Tokat was the Monastery of Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother of God) called Koy-Kessen, a beautiful spot that attracted many pilgrims on feast days.<sup>82</sup>

Outside of the cities (Sivas, Tokat, Amasia Marsovan) and towns (Khavsa, Ladik, Niksar, Zile, Zara, Shabin-Karahisar, Gurun, Divrig), all of which had their Armenian communities, Armenians were found chiefly in the northern parts of the vilayet, where there were many wholly or partly Armenian villages.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 671.



Armenian Villages between Sebastia and Zara

*Prominent Sebastia Armenians*

The city of Sebastia and the neighboring area were home to many prominent Armenians. From the tenth century, there is the historian Ukhtanes of Edessa (Urfa), who was actually a bishop of Sebastia. In the fifteenth century, there was the medical writer Amirdovlat of Amasia, whose works have yet to be translated.<sup>83</sup> Although probably no Armenian surpassed the achievements of Mkhitar of Sebastia in the eighteenth century, more than one achieved distinction after that time. Chief among these was Andranik (Antranig) Ozanian (1865-1927), a native of Shabin-Karahisar, who began his revolutionary activity in Sivas in 1888. He joined the Armenian Revolutionary Federation four years later, but eventually became alienated from the party. With an elite corps of Armenian braves, Andranik was active in the defense of the Armenian peasantry all over Western Armenia. Fighting against Turkey during the Balkan wars, he was in the Caucasus at the outbreak of World War I to command an Armenian volunteer battalion in the Russian army. After the formation of the first Armenian republic in 1918, Andranik moved from his base in Zangezur to liberate Karabagh when he was halted by a British commander. He was on a fund-raising mission in Europe and America when the Armenian republic fell to the Turks at the end of 1920, Andranik died in Fresno, California, in 1927.<sup>84</sup>

Second only to Andranik among the distinguished military figures of Sebastia was the hero Sebastatsi Murad (Murat Hakobian, also known as Khrimian, 1872-1918), from the village of Govdun, Kovtun), who left home at an early age to become one of the foremost *fedayis* or freedom fighters. A member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, he operated in Sasun and in the Caucasus as well as in his native province. Surrounding himself with a cohort of young braves from Sebastia, including

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<sup>83</sup> Srбуhi P. Hayrapetian, *Hayots hin ev mijnadarian grakanutian patmutiun* [History of Ancient and Medieval Armenian Literature] (Antelias, Lebanon: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1988), p. 444.

<sup>84</sup> Christopher Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p. 381. For the life of Andranik, see Antranig Chalabian, *General Andranik and the Armenian Revolutionary Movement* (Southfield, MI: n.p., 1988).



Yegho of Zimara, Bidza Mgrdich, and Vartan Shabaz of Divrig, he organized a team of field workers, who worked mightily to raise the consciousness of the local Armenians otherwise so used to accepting their lot with grim fatalism. These included Vahan Vartanian, Karekin Keshikian, Kachadur Grdodian, Khachig Chimenian, Avedis Chavush Shishmanian, and others. Murad was one of the most celebrated heroes of the struggle of the Armenian people for survival after the Genocide of 1915. He was killed in battle at Baku in the summer of 1918, defending the city against the advancing Turkish army.<sup>85</sup>

Other Sebastia Armenians to achieve distinction were Nshan Chimenian (1870-1908), a native schoolteacher of Govdun, and his assistant, Nigoghos Narviretsi, of the village of Narvir near Agn, who were instrumental in the introduction and spread of the aims of the Hnchakian Revolutionary Party, which gained a strong foothold in the area. Arevi Stepan, another native of Govdun, took part in the seizure of the Ottoman Bank in 1896. Sebastia produced not only warriors and revolutionaries, however. Daniel Varoujan (1884-1915), a native of the village of Brgnik, was a most distinguished poet, unfortunately figuring among those many intellectuals and writers who perished in 1915 in the days following April 24.

### *Massacres and Genocide*

The Hamidian massacres of 1894-96 began at Trebizond in October and spread throughout Western Armenia during the following months. The vilayet of Sivas was struck especially in a four-day period, November 12-15, 1895, resulting, according to consular reports, in the slaughter of some 1,500 people in the capital alone. The carnage spread on November 15 to Amasia, where nearly 1,000 people were killed, to Marsovan, where there were about 100 victims (the smaller number perhaps because of the Americans and other foreigners in the city). The wave of

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<sup>85</sup> Hambardzumian, *Village World*, pp. 57-58. On Murad, see also *Armenian Freedom Fighters: Memoires of Rouben Der Minasian*, abridged trans. James G. Mandalian (Boston: Hairenik, 1963), photograph between pp. 128-29; Toynbee, *Treatment of Armenians*, pp. 317-20; Walker, *Armenia*, p. 403.

bloodshed then engulfed Gurun, where three-quarters of the 2,000 Armenian families, some 1,500 were wiped out.<sup>86</sup> A chief source of information on the events during this troubled period was provided by the U.S. consulate in Sivas, which functioned from 1886 to 1906.

Secure in its location deep within the Ottoman Empire, Sivas was relatively undisturbed by the combat in World War I, which reached as far as Trebizond and Bitlis, but its prosperous Armenian population of merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, craftsmen, government employees, professional people, churchmen, farmers and peasants was nevertheless uprooted and deported. The Armenian villages of Sivas sanjak were cleared in June 1915, and the turn of the city came in July. One of the heroic events during the Genocide was the defense of Shabin-Karahisar, an example of Armenian resistance and ultimate annihilation—an epic recorded by Aram Haigaz as *The Fall of the Aerie*.<sup>87</sup>

### *Sivas Today*

After the end of World War I, many surviving Armenians gathered in Sebastia as they did in other cities of Anatolia. There were high hopes that the Allies would award Lesser Armenia to the nascent Armenian republic centered at Erevan. This was not to be. The abortive Treaty of Sèvres (1920) excluded all of northwestern and southwestern Armenia from the proposed state, while Sebastia itself, now exclusively Sivas, became the center of the Turkish Nationalist movement that would successfully defy the Allied Powers and lead in 1923 to a drastically revised peace treaty at Lausanne and the formation of the Republic of Turkey. The Armenian remnants and the Greek population were expelled from all of Anatolia, with Sivas becoming a fully Turkish and Muslim city.

In the first census taken by the Turkish republic in 1927, Sivas was still a small town of about 30,000 people. Although this figure had risen to only 50,000 by 1950, Sivas became

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<sup>86</sup> Walker, *Armenia*, p. 161.

<sup>87</sup> See note 72 above.

linked by rail to Ankara and other Anatolian cities from the 1930s. It was not only an important railway junction but also a center for the production and repair of railway locomotives and cars.<sup>88</sup> With the rise of these industries, the city grew rapidly and now has a population of more than 200,000 inhabitants.<sup>89</sup> Sivas has now become a modern city, one of the most European in appearance in eastern Anatolia. Its streets are wide, its hotels are well appointed, and its parks are handsomely designed, one of them being adorned with old tombstones, including some with Armenian inscriptions. One of the chief sights of the city is the former Armenian school building where the Ottoman army officer, Mustafa Kemal Pasha (the future Kemal Ataturk), consolidated the Turkish Nationalist movement in the summer and autumn of 1919 as the precursor to the present Turkish republic. Among the pictures that adorn the walls of this museum is a small painting showing the monks of an Armenian monastery offering submission to the original Turkish invaders. Tokat has also prospered since Ottoman times, with a population now of more than 100,000.

Armenian Sebastia may have ended in 1915, but there were said to be about 300 Armenians still living quietly there as late as the 1970s.<sup>90</sup> Echoes of the city and its province survived in the Diaspora, where in the United States alone the Sebastia Compatriotic Union and/or the Pan-Sebastia Reconstruction Union once had chapters in New York City, Binghamton, Syracuse, Troy, Boston, Worcester, Springfield, Brockton, Providence, Hartford, Bridgeport, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Fresno, Los Angeles, San Francisco and elsewhere. In the Republic of Armenia, a suburb of the capital has been named Nor Sebastia in memory of this erstwhile thriving Armenian center—the capital of Lesser Armenia.

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<sup>88</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 10, p. 691.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 559. According to information in vol. 9 of this source, the 1980 census showed 172,864 persons for the city and 750,144 for the territorially much reduced province or *il* of Sivas.

<sup>90</sup> *Hayastani Sovetakan hanragitaran*, vol. 1, p. 27.